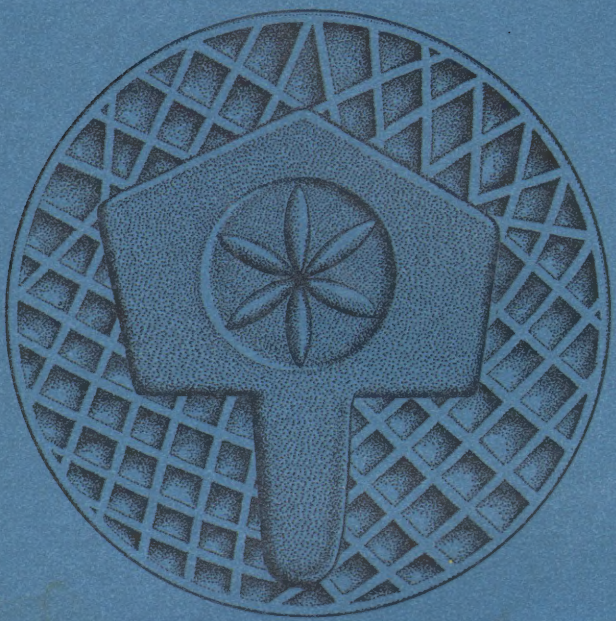
OFFICIAL GUIDE

Melrose Abbey



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MELROSE ABBEY is situated in the town of Melrose, Roxburghshire.

HOURS OF OPENING

	Weekdays	*Sundays*
APRIL TO SEPTEMBER	9.30 am—7 pm	2 pm—7 pm
OCTOBER TO MARCH	9.30 am—4 pm	2 pm—4 pm

ADMISSION FEES

Adults 10p; children under 15 and pensioners 5p.

FRONT COVER DESIGN

This is derived from a lead token in the Site Museum. It is a rebus or play upon the word Melrose which was apparently taken by the monks as their badge. The centre is a mason's mallet or 'mel' upon which is the Cistercian rose.

Melrose Abbey

Description by the late J. S. RICHARDSON
HRSA, LLD, FSA SCOT
formerly Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland

History by the late MARGUERITE WOOD
MA, PhD
formerly Keeper of the Burgh Records, Edinburgh

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DESCRIPTION

Site

In 1131 a mission under St Bernard's direction from the Abbey of Clairvaux in the ancient province of Champagne established the Cistercian Order of Monks at Rievaulx in Yorkshire. Five years later the Abbot of Rievaulx, finding a patron in David I, King of Scots, sent a colony of White Monks to Melrose[1] (now Old Melrose), a place hallowed in the annals of the Celtic or Culdee Church, and they received lands in the vicinity.

The position at Old Melrose being unsuitable for a Cistercian monastery the monks selected a site in the valley of the Tweed 4·02 km (2½ miles) further west at a place called Little Fordell. On lower ground than that occupied by the original Melrose monastery, the new site offered the necessary drainage facilities for the conventual buildings and was more suitable for the requirements of an order of monks who specialised in agriculture and in horse and cattle breeding. The valley was rich in alluvial loam and meadow land; on the lower slopes of the sheltering hills there was good red soil for fields and for orchards, and the uplands afforded good pasturage. The river running through their lands provided salmon and trout in abundance.

The road from England to Tweeddale and the Lothians, made by the Romans in far distant years, passed the Abbey. That its proximity was advantageous in the days of peace—but disastrous in times of war—is evident from the history of Melrose.

General Plan

Probably the general plan of the Abbey was laid out at the commencement of the building and although the monks continued to reside at Old Melrose until the buildings were ready for them, it is reasonable to suppose that the lay brothers or *Conversi* were temporarily accommodated at the new site.

The claustral buildings were placed on the north side of the Abbey Kirk in order to secure drainage with running water directed from

[1] A carved corbel of 12th-century date, from the church of St Cuthbert which was at Old Melrose, is preserved in the Museum at the Abbey.

the Tweed and from a stream which flowed from the northern slopes of the Eildon Hills. This burn, now called the Malthouse burn, has long since been diverted into a channel which carries it eastward from a point some distance away to the south of the Abbey.

First Abbey Kirk

Church and buildings were in accordance with the established plan and simple architecture enjoined by the Cistercian Rule. They were probably whitewashed both inside and outside and had roofs of lead and of red tile. The Abbey Kirk was completed by 1146 and dedicated in that year to the Virgin Mary. It had a western porch or galilee, an aisled nave, transepts each furnished with three eastern chapels, and a presbytery. The monk's quire occupied the eastern part of the nave and to the west of it was the lay brothers' quire. These quires were cut off from each other by a retroquire occupying a bay and from the aisles by screen walls which linked up the piers of the main arcades. The floors of the presbytery and chapels were paved with glazed tiles, coloured yellow, green or brown and set in geometric patterns. The western half of the nave, containing the lay brothers' quire, was the only part of this kirk which existed until the final destruction of the monastery. The remaining evidence is the fragment of the west wall with the lower part of the entrance doorway, the foundations of the square nave piers and their connecting screen walls, and meagre remains of the north wall. There are also traces of the galilee abutting the western elevation which was remodelled and extended in the 13th century. The galilee contains interments and fragments of the grave covers still remain.

The cloister measured 42·67 m by 37·1 m (140 ft by 125 ft), thus equalling in length the cloister at Rievaulx. The monks occupied the buildings on the east and north sides and the lay brothers those on the west side. In order to provide full accommodation for the monks the Cistercian frater, or refectory, was set north and south at right angles to the cloister. It is possible that the original plan included a passage or lane which would occupy the position of the existing west cloister walk. If this was so then the original cloister walk lay parallel to the lane.

To the east of the monks' range was the infirmary hall and chapel and the guest house was to the west of the lay brothers' range. The Abbot's house, the bakehouse, brewhouse, malthouse, mill, barn, offices and stables completed the buildings. The monastery was enclosed within a precinct or mantle wall, 1·61 km in length.

The Chronicle of Melrose relates that in 1246 Matthew, the 16th Abbot of Melrose, erected a magnificent hall on the bank of the

stream and many convenient offices and buildings. The hall was probably the building, now indicated by foundations, which is situated immediately to the south of the lade and at the north-east corner of the area maintained by the Department of the Environment. The long vaulted chambers of the eastern and western ranges can be assigned to the period of his abbacy.

Records of Destruction

The Abbey was pillaged and destroyed by Edward II in 1322, and again in 1385 when Richard II set fire to it. The damage was so serious that it necessitated a rebuilding of the Abbey Kirk from the presbytery westward to the retroquire. This project included the rebuilding of the western half of the nave, but only the southern chapels of this scheme were built and these were connected with the old part of the nave which was retained.

Sir Ralph Evers in the spring of 1544–5 set fire to the town and pillaged and desecrated the Abbey Kirk and its tombs, including that of the Douglases. Later in 1545 the Earl of Hertford destroyed the monastery and wrought disaster to the kirk. By 1556 the buildings had not been repaired as the sub-prior and three monks complained that the Commendator would do nothing for the reparation of the Kirk and buildings. They told how the common office houses such as the conventual hall (frater) 'quhair we suld eit', kitchen, bakehouse, brewhouse, malthouse, which should have been repaired, had not been touched, 'Throcht inlak of the samyn the conventuale observance and ordinar ar not keipit'. They complained that the Commendator had disposed of lead needed for the Abbey to the Archbishop of Glasgow and that 500 merks should have been given to a brother 'Master of Work' to restore 'the kirk and dourtour and uthur placis quhair maist neid is'. Two years later they reported that persons in the neighbourhood were tearing down and removing lead from the cloister.

In 1573 Sir Walter Scott of Branxholm was accused by the monks of dismantling, in 1569, the 'inner queir' (the quire), 'uter kirk' (nave), 'the stepile and croce kirk of the same' (the tower and transepts) and carrying off the stones, timber, lead, iron and glass and later of taking away similar materials from the Abbot's hall and the house called the 'west loftis'. Scott's reply was that he had removed the materials to save them from the English invaders.

In the years that followed part of the nave to the west of the monks' quire was cast down; five aisle chapels, which were burial places of neighbouring landed proprietors, were spared. The domestic buildings were used as quarries and their remains were covered by the fallen debris.

Post Reformation Parish Kirk

In 1618 the three bays of the nave of the Abbey Kirk which had constituted the monks' quire were adapted for parochial use. The remains of the fine rib-and-panel vaulting were removed, the wall-heads reduced and the inner arcades of the south clerestory windows lowered and altered. A massive rubble wall built of material quarried from the Abbey was set up against the north arcade to carry a plain stone vault. Screen walls with windows were erected at either end of this construction and the interior fitted with wooden galleries. When a new parish kirk was built in 1810 on the Weirhill to the west of the Abbey the screen walls at the ends of the 17th-century kirk were taken down and the structure left as it appears to-day, a dismal tunnel masking the beautiful proportions and design of the mediæval building.

Building Materials

The oldest dressed stone is ashlar, of small size, roughly axed. It was transported by pack horses from a quarry on the river bank in the vicinity of Old Melrose. This type of ashlar is to be seen in the sacristy north wall. The local stone of the Quarryhill is a volcanic ash, varying from a warm yellow to a grey-green tint, and was used principally for the rubble masonry in the late 12th- and the 13th-century work. In the latter period the grey-green variety of this stone was dressed and moulded. Stone[1] from the Dryburgh quarries was used for the finer details in freestone of 13th-century date and the present Abbey Kirk was built of this stone, which varies in colour from a warm ochre to a mellow red.

Timber used in the process of building and for roofing was obtained from the neighbouring forests; lime came from the Kelso district; the tiles for the roof and for the floor were made locally[2] but the lead for roof coverings was brought from England.

[1] A coped gravestone of considerable weight was imported from Fosterleigh Quarry, Durham, in the 13th century. This monument now lies in the presbytery.

[2] The Rev. Adam Mylne, who lived at Melrose during the first half of the 18th century, has recorded that 'a little to the south of Darnick is a place called the Tile house where they made their tile for the service of the monastery, and a great deal of it is sometimes found there finely glazed'.

The Abbey Kirk

The Abbey was in the hands of the English from 1346 to 1389. Work may have been going on at that time but it seems more probable that it is to the period after the burning in 1385 that the building of the new Abbey Kirk must be assigned.

General Description of Later Abbey Kirk

When the major part of the kirk of King David's time was taken down the structure which arose was of a vastly different architectural standard. The Cistercians at Melrose, gradually discarding the austerity and simplicity enjoined by their statutes, gave way to a profusion of ornament. They produced the most splendid examples of architecture raised in Scotland in late mediæval times—a great composition conceived by master masons whose names, all but one, remain unknown. The style of architecture adopted was inspired by the late Decorated and early Perpendicular styles of 14th-century date, to be found at the Minsters of York and Beverley. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the master mason responsible for much of the detail belonged to the Yorkshire School of craftsmen. The most pronounced English feature is the Perpendicular character of the east clerestory windows of the transepts, the windows in the presbytery, and those of the eastern chapels opening off it. It seems possible that these windows were designed to receive subjects of stained glass supplied by an English School of glass designers. In 1409 Abbot David Binning obtained permission from Henry IV to go with twelve servants to the shrine of St Thomas à Becket at Canterbury; the permit continued for a year. It is, therefore, possible that this Abbot was responsible for introducing the foreign taste.

In its plan the kirk resembled the earlier building but provision was made for a series of chapels opening off the south aisle of the nave; the transepts and presbytery were larger and extended further to the east. Although the design is one composition, the work proceeded by stages throughout the 15th century and terminated at the commencement of the 16th century, but the contemplated west end of the nave was never built.[1] Throughout that time the work of only two of the eleven successive Abbots who presided over the monastery can be identified by their coats-of-arms on the structure—Andrew Hunter (1442-*c* 1455) and William Turnbull (1503-1507).

[1] The narrowness of the north aisle is due to the central line of the first kirk being retained and no encroachment made on the cloister.

The best of hewers worked on the building, fashioning the subtle outline of the mouldings and the jointing of the masonry. Stone carvers devised and carried out designs of leaf, bud and flower. They produced the gargoyles shaped like strange, uncouth animals or flying dragons that belched out the roofwater, and set up the array of demons, devils, and hobgoblins on the buttress intakes and gables. Sculptors or imagers gave the master touch to representations of the Christ, the Virgin, the saints and martyrs that filled the many elaborate niches and to the angel musicians and human figures on the supporting corbels. Heads of kings, queens, lords, ladies, monks, craftsmen, saracens, and scolds looked down from their places at each side of the windows, from which their faces have smirked, smiled, scowled, and grimaced throughout the centuries.

The new kirk was vaulted throughout with a simple rib-and-panel construction but the vaultings in the presbytery, and the eastern chapels connected with it, were of a highly ornamental nature. Over all the vaults were lead-covered wooden roofs.

At the clerestory level a mural passage, protected at the window arcades by open quatrefoil parapets, served all parts of the kirk except the eastern end of the presbytery where communication between the south and north clerestorey was made by ascending a small wheel-stair to the roof, crossing the roof by a passage and then descending on the other side. A turnpike or wheel-stair in the west wall of the south transept, another in the north wall of the north transept (with the entrance from the monks' dorter) and probably others at the west end of the nave, gave access to the clerestory passages, the roofs of the kirk and the tower over the crossing. This tower had a small turnpike in the south-west corner and contained the bell chamber. It had three windows in each side and it was probably capped by a low wooden spire rising from within the wall-walk.

The wall-walks and the gables of the kirk were protected by open quatrefoil parapets arising from wall-head courses ornamented with gargoyles and numerous carved paterae and the elevations were enhanced by flying buttresses and supporting buttresses, spaced at intervals along the walls to take the downward and outward thrust of the vaulting.

Aisle Chapels

Eight aisle chapels remain. Each was entered through a doorway in a wooden screen which separated the chapel from the aisle; altars with retables above stood against the east walls. Some of these adornments were probably made by members of the Flemish guilds of woodcarvers and purchased for the monastery through the agency

of those who sold the Melrose wool at Ghent and Bruges. The positions for the clamps which affixed these furnishings can still be seen and in the fifth chapel (reading from the west) high up on the wall the masonry is scorched where the retable has been burned. The piscinæ[1] are in the south wall and have flat or projecting canopies, the decoration of which is of architectural character. The insides of the bowls are either scalloped or plain and the outside ornamentation is of leaf pattern. On either side of the piscina recesses are niches.

The foliaceous carving on the caps of the pillars and on the corbels of the three western chapels is inferior in quality to the carving elsewhere. These chapels were completed at the commencement of the 16th century during the abbacy of William Turnbull, whose initials can be seen on the back wall of the piscina recess in the third chapel (reading from the west). In this chapel, set against the south wall, is a graveslab found in 1815. It bears an incised representation of a man in the civil costume of the period, and the remains of an inscription now defaced—

hic : jacet : honorabilis : vir georgi (us) halliburton : . . . .
i : october : anno ; dm : md : xxxviii :

The next chapel may have been dedicated to St Michael, as his image can be seen in the central boss of the vaulting. Another boss is carved with an angel holding a shield on which are discernible the arms of Abbot Andrew Hunter. On the floor are two graveslabs—the one bears the inscription, 'HEIR · LIES · OF · GUD · MEMOIRE · DAME · MARRGARET · KER · FIRST · WYFE · TO · IAMES · PRINGIL · OF · WODHOUS · AND · EFTER · HIS · DECEIS · MAREIT · SIR · DAVID · HOME · OF · WODDERBURNE · KNYCHT · QUHA · DECEISSIT · THE · 24 · OF · FEBRUARE · ANNO · DO. · 1589' and the other; 'HEIR · LYES · ANE · HONORABLE · VOMAN · CRISTIN · LUNDIE · SPOUS · TO · IAM QUHYTBANK · SCHO · DECEISSIT · 19 · JULY · 1602 · LAMENT · FOR · SYN · AND · STYL · THOU · MURN · FOR · TO · THE · CLAY · VE · MAN · TURN.'

The chapel is the burial place of the Pringles of Woodhouse and Whytebank.

The fifth chapel has been appropriated as a burial place by the Scotts, lairds of Gala, and the Pringles of Galashiels, and it contains a crude effigy of 'ANDRO PRINGIL FEUAR OF GALOSCHIELS' who died in 1585. The next three chapels were utilised as part of the post-Reformation parish kirk, and as galleries were set in them, the walls have been mutilated by joist holes. On the west wall of the sixth

[1] *Piscina.* A basin with a drain, set in the wall to the south of the altar, where the altar vessels were rinsed. Close to the basin was a shelf, or small niches, for the cruets which held the wine and the water used for the Eucharist.

chapel is a mural monument to David Fletcher who died in 1665. He was sometime minister of Melrose and afterwards became bishop of Argyll during the Episcopacy. In the seventh chapel, above the position of the altar, is a stone intended for a mural panel. On it can be traced the lining out for an inscription and its surrounding ornamental border. For some reason the stone had been discarded before it was built into its present position. Another stone discarded from the sculptor's hands is in the same wall, high up and facing into the next chapel. On it are inscribed the names of saints.

Miniani : Katine :
Thome : Pauli : Cuthb
te : S. Petre : Ketigin

The names may have reference to the dedications of chapels or may be a list of images cut by a sculptor. Set into the floor of the eighth chapel, but not in its original position, is a 13th-century 'priedieu'; the front of this stone bears a cross-head composed of four horse-shoe patterns, and on the sloping top is inscribed in Lombardic lettering, 'ORA PRO ANIMA FRATRIS PETRI CELARII (Pray for the soul of Brother Peter, the Cellarer).' The vault ribs have been ornamented with inverted cresting and the window has three lights instead of four as in the other chapels.

The vaulting of the south aisle is adorned with foliaceous bosses, but one boss in the westernmost bay is carved with a heraldic shield bearing three fleur-de-lys, the Arms of France.

Pulpitum

The pulpitum or choir screen is set between the fourth pair of piers to the west of the crossing. The upper part of the screen is destroyed but the cornice, enriched with a stem-and-leaf pattern, remains. The doorway giving access to the monks' quire is in the centre and to the south of it is a wall-press for keeping altar furnishings. Within the short passage on the north side a small stair led up to the loft and overhead the ceiling is ornamented with dwarf vaulting, the central boss of which represents the head of our Lord.

Monks' Quire-Stalls

The monks' quire-stalls occupied the space between the pulpitum and the crossing and were set against the stone screens which separated the quire from the aisles. They were of oak and were ordered from Cornelius de Aeltre, citizen of Bruges and master of the craft of carpenters there. According to specification they were modelled from the stalls in the monastic church of Dunis in Flanders

and had carvings similar to those in the choir of the church of Thosan near Bruges. From the first Cornelius appears to have been dogged by ill luck—among other things his carver was killed in a riot. Owing to delay in delivering the stalls a case against him was brought in 1441 before the magistrates of Bruges by Sir John Crawford, monk of Melrose, and William Carebis, a Scots merchant, both being procurators for the Abbot and Convent. The magistrates after hearing the evidence gave judgement as follows: first that the procurators of the Abbot should pay to the convent of the Friars Minor of Bruges, in whose refectory the stalls had been stored for many years, preventing the use of the place, the sum of four pounds Flemish; second, that they should pay for the transport of the work in the condition it then was to the port of Sluys, there to be put on shipboard for the sum of two pounds Flemish; third that they should pay to the said Cornelius for the help of his wife and sons and to assist him to take the said work to Scotland, the sum of two pounds Flemish. Lastly the procurators were to grant to him and his carver safe conduct to travel to Melrose to finish and erect the stalls and when the work was complete to give him a 'decent' reward for his labour and assure his safe return to Sluys. The stalls would thus appear to have been ordered in Abbot Hunter's time.

In the eastern part of the nave the carvings of the caps of the piers are worthy of note and are composed of leaf ornament, beautifully arranged and undercut. The 'curly green' examples are the most interesting.

South Transept

The transepts have been injured by the fall of the tower. The vaulting in the north transept is demolished except in one of the eastern chapels and the vaulting in the South Transept is reduced to two bays and an eastern chapel. The south wall of the transept and its splendid window of decorated tracery escaped the disaster but the open-work parapet of the passage, at the window sill level, has been destroyed with the exception of the cornice enriched with angel figures holding scrolls or playing musical instruments. The clerestory windows, with their delightful inner arcades of various patterns, are perhaps the best examples of a style which went out of fashion in English Gothic as it obscured light.

The remains of two interesting inscriptions in Gothic lettering are to be seen on the west wall; both have reference to a master mason named John Morvo (Moreau), who was born in Paris and who was probably responsible for detailing the features of the south gable. Before the inscriptions were badly weathered they were transcribed

by the Rev. Adam Mylne, a minister of Melrose in the second quarter of the 18th century. The one in the square panel reads:

Johñ : Morow : sum : tym : callit :
was : I : and : born : in : parysse :
certanly : and : bad : in : kepyng :
al : mesoun : werk : of : Santan
droys : ye : bye : kyrk : of glas
gw : melros : and : paslay : of :
nyddysdayll : and : of : galway :
I : pray : to God : and : mari : bathe :
& : swete : sanct : Johne : to : kepe :
this : baly : kyrk : fra : skathe :

The other inscription is on the lintel of the doorway to the turnpike called the bell stair. It is arranged on three sides of a panel which contained a shield charged with two masons' compasses set saltire-wise, and fleur-de-lys. Six of the words are now obliterated and have been so for well over a hundred years:

sa : ye : [ ] : sua :
cumpas : [ ] : trouth :
gays : [ ] : and :
evyn : aboute : laute : sall : do : but : dlute :
be : balde : to : yebende q°

Johne :: morvo

The central boss of the inner bay of the vaulting bears the coat-of-arms of Andrew Hunter, while the central boss of the next bay is carved with a human head encircled by a wreath. The three transept chapels were shut off by parclose screens of wood. On the east wall of the southermost chapel is a carved corbel for the support of an image, and the piscina is in the south wall. There is a double piscina in the chapel next to the presbytery. As the altars were under the windows their retables were low and to accommodate them the moulding below the window sills was cut away.

North Transept

A wide stone stair leading to the round-headed doorway of the monks' dormitory occupied the western part of the North Transept. This stairway was used by the monks when going to and from the night services. Close to the first step is a holy-water stoup.

In the centre of the north wall of this transept is a round-headed doorway which is the entrance to the sacristy or 'wax cellar' as it is designated in a document of 1558. A long, sunk panel, framed on three of its margins with leaf-and-stem carving, stretches across the wall above the level of the night-stair doorway. Set on the shelf are fourteen large pedestals and fourteen small ones which supported images of metal or of wood painted and decorated. The small figures probably represented angels. Three arched openings above the panel light the clerestory passage, and higher up is an interesting circular window with its tracery complete. Remains of altars are to be seen in two of the chapels. These chapels have been dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, and the statues of the saints stand in niches high up on the wall above the night-stair and facing their respective chapels. There is a credence corbel in the north wall of St Peter's chapel. The windows of St Benedict's chapel, which is next to the presbytery, and those of its counterpart on the south side (St Martin's?) are of pronounced English character. The ceiling of the eastern bay of St Benedict's chapel was probably unique in the ecclesiastical architecture of Scotland; it was very flat and lavishly ornamented with leaf carvings. A small piscina has been improvised on the base of the respond immediately to the south of where the altar stood.

Presbytery

The PRESBYTERY is lit by a magnificent window in the east wall and fine Perpendicular windows in the north and south walls, windows once filled with subjects in stained glass giving the effect of a mass of jewels caught in a network of pearly white. Under the east window are two wall presses, under the side windows are recesses for mural tombs, and in the south wall is a credence and a double piscina. An intricate pattern composed of ribs and bosses adorns the vaulted ceiling. The central boss, the one directly over the place where the high altar stood, is carved with a representation of the Holy Trinity attended by two censing angels. To the west of the Trinity is a figure of St Andrew holding his cross, and reading clockwise are the following: St Bartholomew holding the flaying knife, St Peter with the keys, St Thomas with the spear, St James the Less grasping the bludgeon, St James the Greater holding this staff and a scrip or a costrel, St Paul with a sword and St Matthew with the axe. Each figure holds a scroll as well as his special emblem. To the south of Andrew is a saint holding a book, and to the south-east of Peter is an angel. Other bosses are carved with rose or leaf ornaments.

The floor of the kirk was paved with stone and fragments are still *in situ*.

Altar Dedications

In the *Liber de Melros* there are references to the altars of *Sancti Marie in perpetuo* and of St Bridget, and chapels dedicated to St Benedict, St Martin, and St John the Baptist[1] are mentioned in late charters.

South and East Elevations

The doorway in the south wall of the transept leads outside to the kirkyard where from many view-points the elevations of the Abbey Kirk can be studied and admired. The second buttress from the west has a mort-lantern in the form of a hollowed pedestal with a quatrefoil opening to the front. This interesting feature is set on the niche corbel, the light being supplied by a cresset lamp.

King James IV visited Melrose in 1502 and 1504 and distributed drinksilver to the masons. The buttress to the extreme west displays a panel of his full achievement-of-arms dated 1505. Under the Royal Shield is an angel holding a shield which once displayed the arms of Abbot William Turnbull and on either side of this shield and close to it are depicted a mell or mason's mallet and a rose—the rebus of the name Melrose. The rebus is repeated on the corbel of the adjacent buttress and also on the coat-of-arms of Abbot Hunter which ornaments the niche corbel on the fourth buttress. This shield is supported by two angels and bears the three hunting horns of Hunter, two pastoral staves set saltirewise, the initials A. H. in Gothic letters, and the rebus in addition.

Statue of the Virgin

Set in an elaborate niche which adorns the westernmost high buttress is the mutilated figure of the Virgin and Child. The Virgin is defaced and the Child is headless. Mylne relates that the statues at Melrose were mutilated or destroyed in 1649 and that according to a local story the head of the infant Christ fell on the arm of the man who struck it off and so damaged the limb that he never had the use of it again. The Madonna is veiled and crowned and the draperies of her robes fall in well-balanced folds. She stands in the swaying pose so popular during the 14th century in France, Flanders and Germany. The Infant Christ is held on her left arm and with the right hand she holds a flower up to the Babe. The statue is probably an enlarged copy of a wooden image of Continental origin. The supporting corbel is carved with undercut foliage and each side of the niche is framed by a vertical setting of four small niches for

[1] A broken stone image of this saint is in the museum.

statues; the canopy over our Lady is of elaborate architectural treatment; it is hollowed and has pierced fenestrations, the whole design being symbolic of the Celestial Jerusalem.

In the niche of the next high buttress is a representation of St Andrew, Scotland's patron saint, but the figure is now defaced. It was not designed to fit the niche and to make it more suitable a carved pedestal has been added. The image ranges in size with those of St Peter and St Paul in the north transept.

At the wall-head of this part of the building are two gargoyles; the one depicts a winged, calf-headed beast and the other a pig playing the bagpipes.

Exterior of South Transept

A most attractive composition is formed by the south transept, showing the stair turret and its octagonal crocketed spire with the broken outline of the tower high on the background. The arrangement of the niches with their projecting three-sided or bowing-ogee canopies and their carved corbels is exceptionally pleasing. The lower niche-corbels are carved with finely modelled reclining figures of bearded men holding labels. The label of the corbel figure on the west buttress of the transept is inscribed Timete [Deum] (fear the Lord). The corbel supports a reclining figure of a crowned man, probably representing Maximinus, who underlies the statue of St Catherine. The figure on the buttress on the west side of the transept doorway holds an escroll; it was inscribed with the sentence:

Cu : ven[it : Jes : seq : cessabit um]bra : (cum venit Jesus sequitur cessabit umbra—when he comes Jesus follows and the darkness will cease). A figure east of the doorway displays the words Passus. e. q. ipe. voluit (passus est quia ipse voluit—He suffered, because He Himself willed it). These inscriptions may have had some reference to the statues standing on the corbels.

The doorway has deeply recessed jambs heavily moulded. The point of the arch is filled with the Royal Shield and supporting unicorns. The lion rampant faces the sinister instead of the dexter side in order that it might look towards the high altar. Between the doorway and the window sill is an array of images now headless: St Andrew, St Peter, a kneeling figure with hands clasped, a kneeling figure holding a book, St Paul and St Thomas. Set a little above in the centre of the group is a carving of a bearded man looking upwards holding a scroll inscribed Ecce : filius : dei : (Behold the Son of God). He supports a pedestal in which stood a figure of our Lord. Immediately above the great window is an elaborate niche which

probably contained a seated figure of the Virgin. Above it is a bearded human head and on either side is a line of niches sloping downwards. Corbels on the walls of the eastern chapels represent a monk telling his beads, and musician angels with curly hair and smiling faces; one, on the south side of the first window, facing the east, is particularly pleasing. A carving of a cook with his ladle is to be seen high up in the angle made by the two flanking buttresses at the east end of this gable. To the left of the cook is a grotesque figure of a mason holding his chisel and mell.

Exterior of Presbytery

The east gable of the presbytery is renowned for its grace and symmetry; above the window is a seated group representing the Coronation of the Virgin. On either side are two censing angels, and next to those on the south side is the statue of a mitred ecclesiastic. Quaint, cross-legged figures of men or women perch on the sloping intakes of the buttresses; above the intakes are narrow and beautifully proportioned niches. Cross-bow shooting was practised in the kirkyard and the positions of targets can be seen on this gable and on the buttresses of the south transept.

Conventual Buildings

The public-spirited gifts to the nation, by the Duke of Buccleuch[1] and the late Mr Roberts of Drygrange, of the land lying immediately to the north of the Abbey Kirk, have made possible the uncovering of much of the plan of the conventual buildings.

Cloister

The entrance from the kirk to the 'GREAT CLOISTER' is by the processional doorway[2] situated in the most easterly bay of the aisle to the north of the monk's quire. The elevation of this doorway to the cloister is interesting, the carving of the foliage on the caps being exceptionally fine. In the corner to the east of the doorway is a holy water stoup. Stone benches and ornamented wall arcades extend along the remaining walls of the kirk. The arcades on the east wall and of one bay of the south wall are in the Decorated style and the carved pateræ on the cornice present various designs of bud, berry, leaf and flower, and in one instance the clam shell of St James. The design of the arcading over the stone benching, although of earlier architectural character, is of later date. At the west end is a single arcade of more ornate design. The joist holes and corbels above the arcading supported the lean-to roof of the cloister walk. The original cloister had open arches on twin shafts, but probably the part opposite the kirk was rebuilt with solid walls and traceried windows when the great rebuilding took place. The open space enclosed by the four walks of the cloister is known as the garth.

Eastern Range

The EASTERN RANGE extends northwards from the transept of the Abbey Kirk for a distance of 54·86 m (180 ft). It contains the sacristy or 'wax cellar,' the chapter house, the inner parlour,[3] a chamber, and a two-aisled subcroft of seven bays, once ceiled with rib-and-panel vaulting which may have been the monks' day-room. The 12th-century arrangement was altered in the 13th century and further changes were made later; this accounts for the rearrangement of doorways and other features. A doorway at the south-east end of

[1] His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch munificently gifted the ruined kirk to the nation.

[2] The remains of 13th-century gravestones have been used as steps at the doorway and built into the footings of the transept wall. Steps at the sacristy entrance and the plat at the night-stair doorway are also made of gravestones.

[3] Parlour: (French *parloir*) the only place throughout the Abbey where conversation between the monks was permitted.

the subcroft opened into a passage on the south side of the reredorter leading to the infirmary some distance away to the east. Above these rooms was the monks' DORTER or dormitory entered from a stairway called the day-stair which was situated at the north-east corner of the cloister walk. At the south end of the dorter is the doorway to the night-stair, which was within the kirk, and the turnpike which gave access to the clerestory and the roofs. The outline of the dormitory roof can be seen where it abutted on the gable of the kirk. Extending to the east from the dormitory and entered from it was the reredorter which contained the latrines flushed by running water.

Chapter-House

The remains of the CHAPTER-HOUSE are those of the 13th-century building which replaced the first chapter-house, but the masonry of the south wall belongs to the earliest building period of the monastery. It had three entrances from the cloister, was 10·67 m (35 ft) wide by 22·24 m (73 ft) long, and had a vaulted ceiling supported by pillars and wall corbels. The interior was whitewashed and painted with red lines in imitation of ashlar masonry. The floor was paved with tiles set in simple geometric patterns, the tiles varying in size, shape and colour, while some were ornamented with inlaid patterns of lighter clay.[1] The remains of tiled floors at Melrose are one of the two known examples left in Scotland, the other having been recently found at the Cistercian monastery of Glenluce in Galloway, also an Ancient Monument.

The Chronicle of Melrose tells us that Saint Waltheof or Waldeve, the second Abbot, was buried by his own request in the chapter-house, near its entrance, and that some ten years later the tomb was opened by Abbot Josceline in the presence of many ecclesiastics and the body of the saint was found to be uncorrupted. The body was in a similar state when in 1206 it was surreptitiously viewed by Robert, a mason, when employed in making a grave close to that of St Waltheof for Abbot William. The Chronicle records that, in 1340, bodies of Abbots buried at the west end of the chapter-house were translated to the east end, but that the remains of the Saint which by this time had decomposed were left undisturbed, except that a few small bones were removed for relics. A new cover was made for the tomb. In 1921, when excavations were being carried out, a group of three stone-lined coffins was found close to the central doorway, and it was evident that the cover-stone at the foot of one of the coffins was displaced at the making of the easternmost coffin. Was this arrangement of cover-stones Robert the mason's handiwork and are

[1] For an account of these, see *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. lxiii, pages 281 to 310.

these the coffins of Abbot William and St Waltheof? Three fragments of a monumental tomb of Quarryhill stone, finely dressed and moulded and still bearing traces of gilding with pure gold-leaf were recovered during the operations. These possibly formed part of the Saint's shrine to which many pilgrimages were made. They are now preserved in the Museum.

Although the chapter-house in the earlier days of a monastery was the burial place of the Abbots, the Chronicle states that at Melrose there were also burials of lay men and women. The skeleton of a woman was found in 1921 in a 'dug-out' stone coffin. Another object of interest still lies buried beneath the floor of the chapter-house, a mummified human heart enclosed in a cone-shaped container of lead. Decomposed iron box straps were found beside the casket, but nothing to indicate its history.

Bruce's Heart

The heart of King Robert Bruce, who established Scotland's Independence in the 14th century, was probably buried in the Abbey Kirk near the high altar, but owing to the veneration of the Shrine of Waltheof it might have been deposited in the chapter-house.

Northern Range

The northern Cloister buildings contained the DAY-STAIR WARMING-HOUSE, the Frater or dining-hall of the monks which had a lavatory built out into the garth directly opposite the entrance doorway. In the LAVATORY was a great circular basin served with water brought in lead pipes from the Locket Well which was situated on the high ground to the south. The KITCHEN lay to the west of the frater. The original frater was set parallel to the Kirk and occupied the central part of the northern range, but in the 13th century this arrangement was altered and a frater was built at right angles to the old alignment. The new building extended to a distance of 37·1 m (125 ft) from the cloister and was probably of aisled construction; only vestiges of it remain.

Western Range

The remains of the lay brothers' range, which was two storeys high, extend northward from the north wall of the galilee at the west end of the kirk. It is 108·2 m (355 ft.) long and composed of two long buildings set end to end. The southern block was bounded on its east side by the great cloister and on its western side by an outer cloister for the use of the Conversi. Its principal apartments were a

long subcroft apparently of five bays with a central line of pillars and to the north an outer parlour. The western aisle was interrupted at the first bay by a partition wall and here a pier and respond took the place of a pillar. It had doorways in the side walls and one in the north wall which opened out into the outer parlour, a passage giving access from the lesser to the great cloister. No doubt the subcroft served in the first instance as the lay brothers' dining-hall, but later when the extension to the north had been built their frater was transferred there. The subcroft was then made into two separate compartments, the east aisle being blocked by a wall set to line with the partition at the first bay. This larger room was then adapted for one of the monastic industries or possibly a lavatory as a long water trough was introduced into the floor of the east aisle. When this alteration was made the floor was lowered, a drain was laid and water was brought in a lead pipe by gravitation.

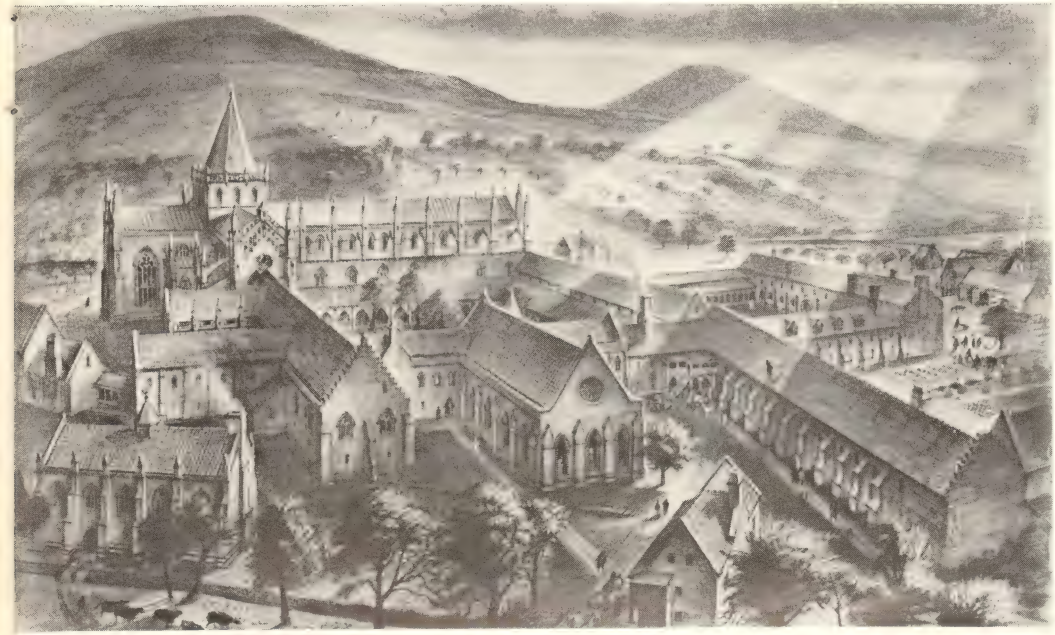
The upper storey of this block was the dorter of the Conversi, from which a night stair led directly into the nave of the Kirk. The day stair to the outer cloister was on the west side and if there was a lane there would be another stair descending into it.

The ground floor of the northern block of the lay brothers range was constructed in the form of a continuous vaulted subcroft, fourteen bays long and with a central line of pillars. This vault construction must have proved defective as at a later date the lateral walls were strengthened by the addition of buttresses of rude construction. The southern end was the lay brothers' frater. The fireplace with tiled back in the western wall to the north indicates the position of the warming-house of the Conversi and the rest of the range was devoted to cellarage. These rooms were separated by light partitions, probably of wood, but at a later date in the history of the buildings rough partitions of stone were introduced at the second, fourth and twelfth bays. There were windows and doorways in the lateral walls and near the north end the great drain of the monastery ran underneath the floor. On the west side of the range this drain passed through the reredorter pit which was in a separate building connected with the first floor forming an extension of the dorter. In the vaulted subcroft of this wing are two tanning pits constructed of tile work. Similar features to these are to be seen at the parent Abbey of Rievaulx in Yorkshire. The accommodation necessary for the lay brothers was very extensive as their numbers in the thirteenth century amounted to about two hundred.

On the west side of the southern block the lesser cloister had a covered walk. The entrance to the monastery was on the west side of this courtyard and at its south-west corner is a small setting of floor tiles, some of which are ornamented with a stamped pattern.

1 Melrose Abbey as it might have appeared in the 15th century, assuming that all the early work had survived. From the drawing by Alan Sorrell—1957.

2 The Abbey from the north-west looking across the cloister garth.



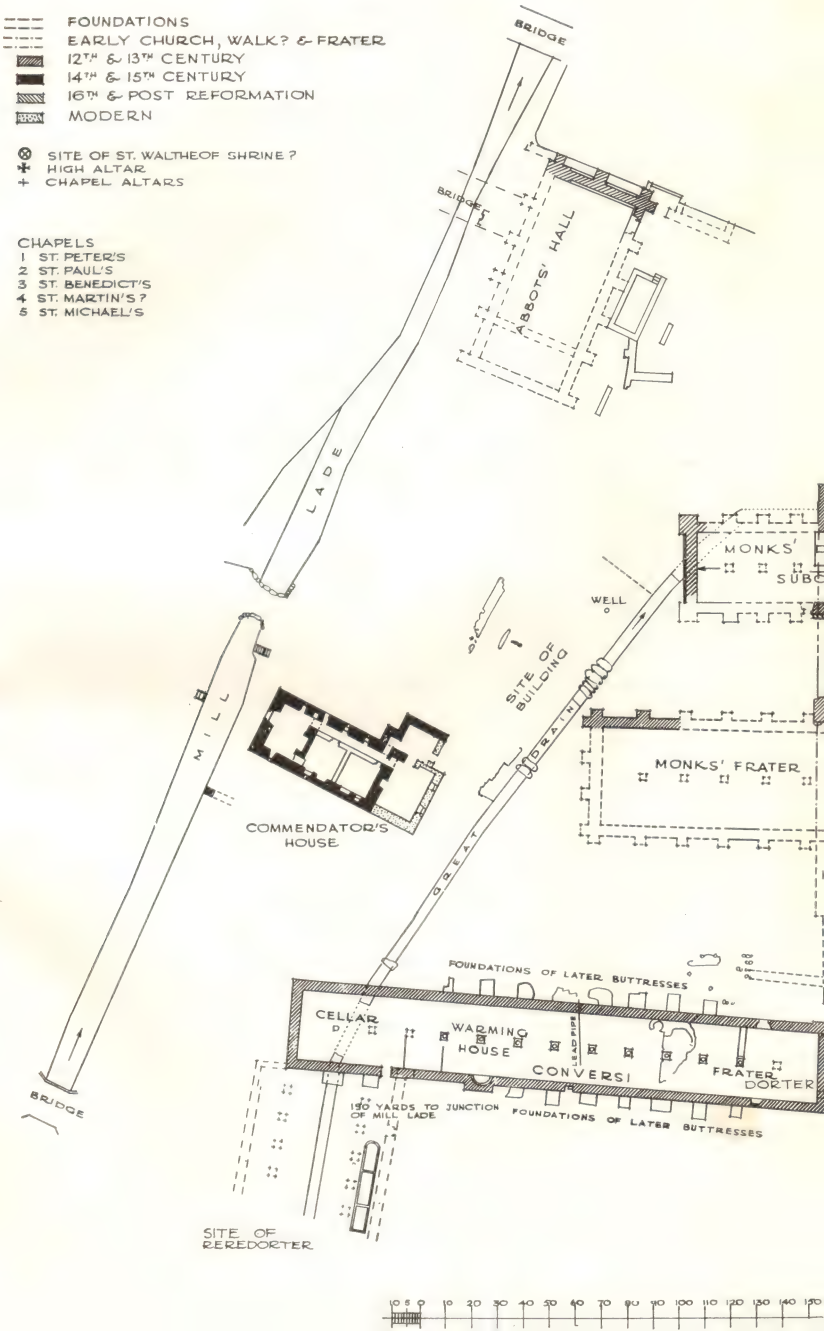
3 The Abbey from the south-east.

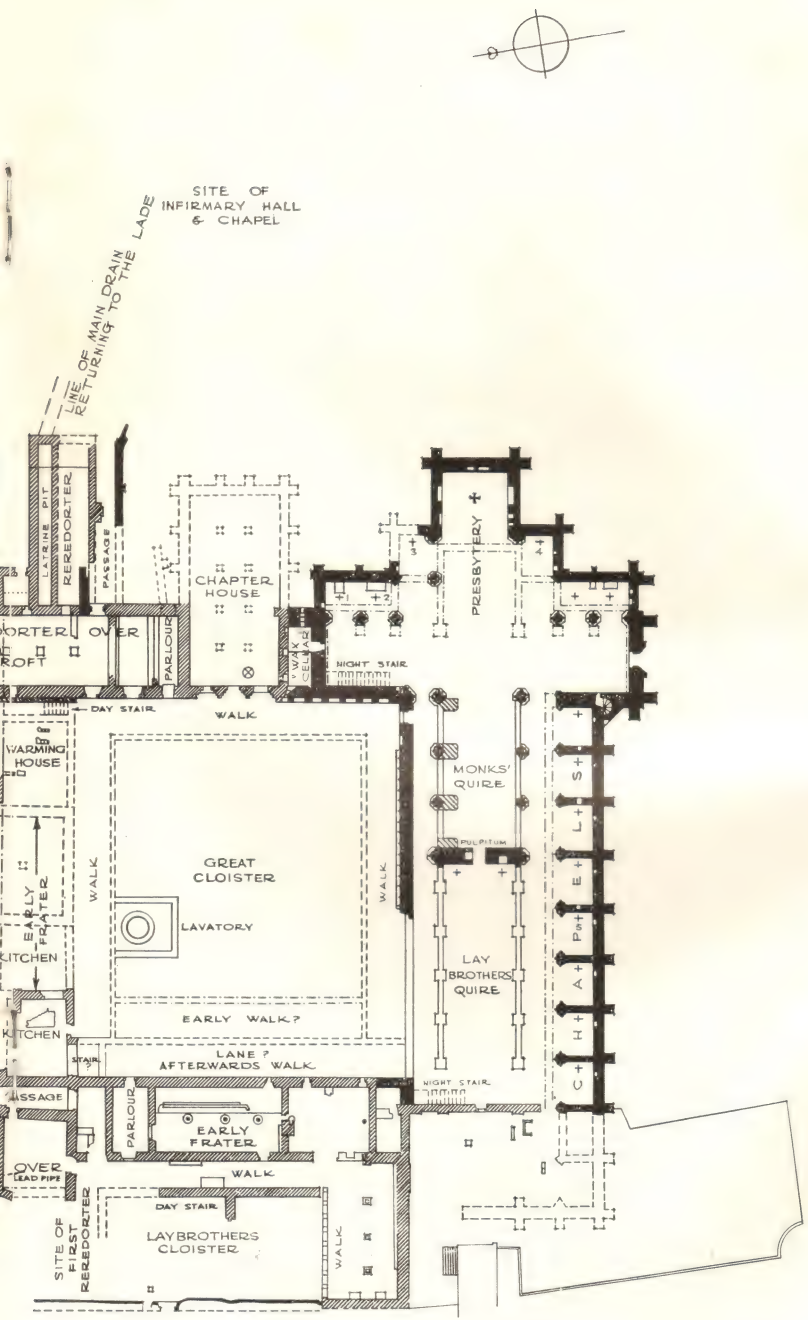
4 Blind arcading in the cloister walk.

5 The great east window.

Melrose Abbey

THE ABBEY OF MELROSE




SITE OF INFIRMARY HALL & CHAPEL
LINE OF MAIN DRAIN RETURNING TO THE LADE
LATRINE PIT
REREDORTER
PASSAGE
CHAPTER HOUSE
PRESBYTERY
PARLOUR
NIGHT STAIR
DAY STAIR
WALK
WARMING HOUSE
MONKS' QUIRE
PULPITUM
GREAT CLOISTER
LAVATORY
EARLY FRATER
KITCHEN
LAY BROTHERS' QUIRE
EARLY WALK?
LANE ? AFTERWARDS WALK
STAIR
NIGHT STAIR
PASSAGE
PARLOUR
EARLY FRATER
OVER LEAD PIPE
WALK
DAY STAIR
LAYBROTHERS CLOISTER
SITE OF FIRST REREDORTER
CHAPEL

FEET

6 The south transept gable.

7 East gable: the coronation of the Virgin.

(a) A cook and a mason. South Transept.

(b) Angel musician. South Transept.

(c) Corbel for niche statue. South Transept.

(d) Corbel for niche statue. East End.

The Abbot's Hall

Abbot Matthew built a hall in 1246 on the south bank of the lade. The remains of this building are fragmentary but from the evidence uncovered in excavation it appears to have been 25·9 m (85 ft) long by 15·24 m (50 ft) wide and had a double line of pillars. The entrance was situated in the south wall near the east end and projecting from the north wall was a bridge which spanned the lade. Two other bridges built by the monks still exist; one is situated a short distance down stream from the Abbot's hall and the other is now incorporated in the bridge which carries the main road from Melrose to Newstead.

The Commendator's House

Another building situated close to the lade and set at right angles to it is of 15th-century origin but in the 16th century after the Reformation it was altered and added to by James Douglas, the last of the Commendators. In the 15th century this building contained on its ground floor at least three chambers furnished with hooded fireplaces. The rooms on the upper floor were entered off a wooden gallery which extended along the east facade and was approached by an outside stair situated at the north end. When the building was transformed into a Commendator's house this gallery was taken down and a square stair tower furnished with loop-holes for hand guns was added. Vaulted cellars and a kitchen were introduced and the upper floors reorganised. This building has been restored to accommodate the relics recovered during the work of excavation. These include broken vessels of pottery once used in the monastery and recovered from the great drain of the reredorter. Most of the pottery is native, but some has been imported from Flanders and the Rhine and the fragments of one dish are of Hispano-Moresco ware. There are coins and jettons-merchants' stamps of lead which were attached to the woven fabrics imported from Arras-metal studs and hasps from off the boards of books, and other small objects of metal or bone. There are also examples of 12th-, 13th-, 14th- and 15th-century carved stone fragments, floor and roofing tiles, samples of early stained-glass, water pipes of lead, and a leaden casket for a head-burial. Two large metal cooking pots unearthed many years ago from near the building are on exhibition. The most important relic however to be viewed happens to be the remains of St Waltheof's Shrine.

The farmery or infirmary hall and chapel occupied a position to the east of the chapter-house. When the building known as the Old Manse was erected the foundations of part of these buildings were uncovered.

The Great Drain

In order to take full advantage of the waters of the Tweed the monks constructed a cauld or dam across the river some 457·2 m to the west of the main buildings of the monastery. The water was carried thence in a lade for a distance of well over a kilometre until it rejoined the river to the east of the precincts. Part of its function was to drive the Abbey Mill. Close to where the western precinct wall crossed the lade a flow of water was diverted and carried along a great drain to flush the reredorter pits of the eastern and western ranges of the cloistral buildings. This drain was 1·22 m (4 ft) wide, 1·52 m (5 ft) deep and 457 m (500 yards) long, and its outlet into the lade was situated some distance to the east of the monastery near the east precinct wall. The sides were built of stone, the floor was cobbled and large rough stone lintels covered it, but where buildings were placed over the drain it was arched. A long stretch of this drain extending from the monks' to the lay brothers' range is now exposed.

The construction of these late 12th-century waterways was a notable achievement for its period, but those who made this innovation had already carried out a greater work of engineering at the parent monastery of Rievaulx where the actual bed of a river was diverted.

Examination pits, dug in 1935 in the orchard of the dwelling-house known as St Cuthbert's lying immediately to the west of the roadway which crosses the lade in a northerly direction, determined the extent and nature of the monastic drain and a tiled floor of a building was also located in the area. Documentary evidence indicates that this was the position of the Bakehouse yard. The monastic mill occupied the site of the present corn mill, which is of late date.

In the churchyard on the back of a small headstone dated 1761 are these lines:

> 'The earth goeth on the earth glistring like gold
> The earth goes to the earth sooner than it wold
> The earth builds on the earth castles and towers
> The earth says to the earth all shall be ours.'

HISTORY

Old Melrose

The original monastery of Mailros, mentioned by Bede in AD 731, is said to have been founded by St Aidan towards the middle of the 7th century with monks brought from Iona by way of Lindisfarne. The first Abbot, Eata, was one of twelve Saxon youths instructed by St Aidan himself. The first Prior, St Boisil, has his name perpetuated in St Boswells, the village once known as Lessudden, again a name which may commemorate St Aidan himself—'Lis Aidan,' St Boisil was succeeded by St Cuthbert, the apostle of the Borders, who dwelt there until called in 664 to be Prior of Lindisfarne. Another monk of Old Melrose, St Bothan, gave his name to the adjacent village of Bowden. With the monastery is also associated the name of Drythelm, a northern Dante, who retired there to end his life in rigorous penance.

Destroyed by Kenneth, King of Scots, in 839, Old Melrose again rose to some fame. It was one of the resting places of the body of St Cuthbert, removed from its grave at Lindisfarne for fear of desecration by the Danes. Prior to that invasion in 875 it is mentioned by Simon of Durham as one of the churches dependent on Lindisfarne. It is recorded that Turgot, later confessor and chronicler to Saint Margaret, Queen of Malcolm Canmore,[1] and bishop of St Andrews, used the place as a retreat between the years 1073 and 1075. At that time the monastery seems to have been deserted, if not destroyed, for it is described as 'the former monastery' and as a 'solitude.' From the place he was driven out by King Malcolm, the reason given being that Turgot and his companion, living in a spot which belonged to the King, would not swear fidelity to him. In the 12th century there seems to have been a church of some importance on the site for a charter of David I between 1130 and 1133 conveyed to the monks of St Cuthbert the church of St Mary at Berwick in compensation for the church of Melrose granted by him to the Cistercians.

Grants of at least a century later bear witness to the continued existence of a church, but the 'bare promontory' was inadequate for the Cistercian monastery by which King David perpetuated the name of the earlier foundation.

[1] 1057-1093.

The Foundation of Melrose Abbey

The Chronicle of Melrose, the work of different monks of the Abbey, gives the date of the founding of Melrose Abbey by David I[1] as 23rd March 1136. The church was consecrated on Sunday, 28th June 1146, being dedicated like all other Cistercian churches to the Blessed Virgin. The new Melrose was the first Cistercian monastery in Scotland. The monks, a reformed branch of the Benedictine order who had adopted a more austere rule, came to England in the beginning of the 12th century, and from Rievaulx in Yorkshire King David brought his colony.

The actual foundation charter is not in existence but the Chartulary of Melrose includes another, probably not later than 1143, which narrates the foundation and the granting by King David to the monks of St Mary of Melrose of his three granges of Eildon, Melrose and Darnick. To these the later charter added the royal lands and forest of Selkirk and Traquair with pasturage for sheep and cattle, with wood for building and burning, and rights of fishing in Tweed. In addition to these the King bestowed Gattonschauch and the lands and woods of Gattonside, according to the bounds ridden by himself, his son, Earl Henry, and the Abbot on the day after Ascension Day 1143.

The Early Abbots

This Abbot, Richard, was the first but did not remain long in office. A man of piety and uprightness, esteemed for learning and eloquence, Abbot Richard earned the dislike of the monks by his quickness of temper and harshness and was removed by the Abbot of Rievaulx in 1148. He retired to the Abbey of Clairvaux in France where he died one year after his disgrace.

To him succeeded Waltheof, or Waldeve, younger son of Queen Matilda, who, but for the opposition of King Stephen, would have been Archbishop of York. From Rievaulx he came to Melrose to remain there till his death in 1159, refusing all promotion. Legends concerning him arose after his death and Jocelin of Furness, his biographer, recounts miracles performed by him.

His successor, Abbot William, ruled the convent till 1170, when he resigned his charge. He was credited with great severity but the ground of his unpopularity seems rather to have been that he discountenanced the miracles said to take place at the tomb of his predecessor, because of the disturbance to the peace of the monastery by the crowds of pilgrims to the place. On the day of his resignation the prior, Joceline, was elected in his place. By him proof, according

[1] 1124-1153

to the custom of the times, was made of the sanctity of the dead abbot. In accordance with the belief that the body of a saint remained incorruptible, the grave of Waltheof was opened, when the body with its vestments was found intact, twelve years after his death. The monks desired to obtain permission to transfer his body to the church but this removal was never effected.

Joceline was called to be Bishop of Glasgow in 1174 'by the demand of the clergy and people and with the assent of the King.' His interest in the monastery was maintained, however, and the chronicle of Melrose describes him as a man kindly, gentle and moderate. The new bishop consecrated as his successor Laurence, a monk of Melrose, who died after three years of office, leaving a reputation for kindness, humility and great learning.

Quarrels over Lands

In the time of his successor, Ernaldus, comes the first of many disputes over the Abbey's possessions, a quarrel with Richard de Moravia over the woods and pasture between Gala and Leader. The chronicler, siding naturally with his own, tells how *Deo adjutorio* the disputed lands were found to be the property of Melrose. Some five years later was a more serious difference with the men of Wedale tried in presence of the King by an assize under the Constable. The men of the assize affirmed 'on their great oath' that the King's forest claimed by the laymen was the pasture of the church of Melrose by the gift of three Kings and the confirmation of the Papacy. Even then that land was not enjoyed by them in quiet. The Bishop of St Andrews laid claim to it and in 1418 the Abbot and convent appealed to Rome for an enquiry as to their right. The appeal was granted but the result not divulged.

Two years before that quarrel comes the first mention of the employment of an Abbot of Melrose outside the walls of his abbey. The Abbots of Melrose and Kelso were appointed to accompany the Bishop of Glasgow on a mission to Rome. There they transacted the King's business with skill and prudence and returned bearing to William the Lion the Golden Rose and papal blessing.

Abbot William died in 1185 and although once so ardently disliked, is recorded as one *pie memorie*. In the same year died Robert Avenel, donor of the lands of Eskdale, then a novice in the monastery, and the grateful scribe ends his entry with the prayer, *cuius anima semper vivat in gloria.*

Promotions and Notable Guests

Successive Abbots were chosen for promotion after a few years of rule: one became head of Rievaulx, another Bishop of Rosemarkie,

and another Bishop of Brechin. Those who thus left it seem to have kept the place in kindly remembrance. Joceline, Bishop of Glasgow, bestowed many favours, among them the gift of the church of St Kentigern in the parish of Hassendean, for the use of pilgrims to the Abbey, and to maintain an anniversary for his soul and those of his predecessors and successors.

Like Robert Avenel, other benefactors of Melrose spent their last days there. Richard de Moreville, High Constable of Scotland, bestowed the lands of Park upon the monastery in 1186 and a few years later retired there to spend the last three years of his life in peace. Another who sought its shelter was Master John of Roxburgh, Treasurer of Glasgow, who died a novice, Bishop Joceline also died at Melrose and was buried in the monks' burial place as though he had never left its walls.

Not long after the monastery entertained for fifty nights an illustrious guest, John of Salerno, Papal Legate, in order to settle a dispute with the Abbey of Kelso. The chronicler hints in a disarming way as to the means used to obtain a settlement, telling how both parties found it well to strengthen their arguments with gifts—to use no unkinder word—of gold, silver and horses, the latter at all times a valued gift, for the Scottish hackney was a good and reliable horse.

The Lands of Melrose

Favoured by David 1, Melrose advanced rapidly to fame and wealth, while his successors proved little behind him in their gifts. A few examples will show the diversity of the lands with which the convent was endowed. Lands in Carrick became theirs, fishings in the Don, salt marshes in Turnberry and Prestonpans, part of Eskdale, lands in Haddington and Mauchline, Lammermuir pasture, including a toft gifted by the Bishop of Glasgow, a toft in Lanark, an oxgate of land in Lessudden, another in Makerstoun, lands in Teviotdale, a peat moss in the territory of Fairnington, the chapels of St Mary of Park and of Old Melrose, the church of Hassendean with its churchlands and teinds. They also possessed lands in Edinburgh, among them a tenement known as the Abbot of Melrose's Lodging, from Andrew Durie, Abbot in 1526. Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, granting to the Abbey four acres of land in the territory of Old Roxburgh, resigned the same by offering a wand at the High Altar.

Sheep and cattle were a source of revenue but there had to be a means of disposing of the wool and skins on which profit was derived. Hence significant gifts are found of houses and land in Berwick-on-Tweed, till the War of Independence, Scotland's greatest port. Some

are by the King, some by the Steward of Scotland, others by humble burgesses. For the trade which these indicate the monks received a protection from Philip, Count of Flanders, relieving them of tolls and granting immunity in time of war, and this document was confirmed by Pope Lucius III.

Succeeding reigns brought the confirmation and increase of such gifts, and Melrose is called by some authorities the richest abbey in Scotland. The grant of churches with their lands and teinds, a type of gift productive of much evil, is found early in the record. It is true that a clause in the granter's charter enjoined the provision by the monastery of a vicar to minister to the people, but the Cistercians were an enclosed order and must appoint a secular priest who received only a small portion of the revenue originally destined for the church, while the larger share fell to the Abbey.

The favour of Kings and other donors remained with the monastery, though it was found necessary to impose limits on some. Walter, son of Alan, the Steward explained in the charter the bounds of his father's gift. The monks were not to hunt, nor take falcons into the forest, 'for that is not becoming to their order, nor do we believe that it is expedient for them'. Alexander II confirmed an agreement between Roger Avenel and the convent as to the forest of Eskdale. This, while reserving to the latter the right to graze beasts, retained the right of hunting with Avenel. The monks were not allowed to destroy the nests of hawks or falcons, nor to cut down the trees in which such nests were found unless it was certain that they had been abandoned. They were forbidden to hunt with packs, or to bring others to hunt, but might trap wolves.

It was in the reign of Alexander II that Adam, Bishop of Caithness, a former Abbot of Melrose, was murdered by the people of his See because of his insistence on the payment of tithes. John, Earl of Caithness, was suspected of complicity in the murder. The King, though at Jedburgh on the eve of a visit to England on affairs of state, upon receiving the news turned northward with an army to avenge the bishop's death.

Alexander II's adventure into foreign policy brought trouble for a time on his kingdom and the church. Intervening in 1217 on the side of Louis of France against King John, his action turned in his disfavour when the English King became reconciled with the Pope. So when the legate crowned John's son, Henry III, he at the same time excommunicated the King of Scots and his people. The Chronicle of Melrose narrates baldly that the King, Scottish Church, priests and people were released from the ban in January 1217–18, with the exception of the bishops and prelates. In March of the same year the Cistercians were ordered to cease from the celebration of

mass and their Abbots, of Melrose, Newbattle, Cupar, Kinloss and St Servan, ordered to present themselves before the legate at York. The exception of the bishops and prelates was due to a scheme to humble the Scottish clergy, summoned thus to obtain absolution from the clergy of England, in consequence of the old claim to the See of York to be the metropolitan of Scotland.

The affection of King Alexander II for Melrose seems to have been considerable, for, seized with a fatal illness during an expedition to the Western Highlands, he ordered that his body should be buried in the Abbey. He died at Kerrera, near Oban, and according to his desire his body was brought to the Abbey church.

Alexander III[1] continued to give Melrose the favour of his predecessors and gifts by him and his subjects are considerable. Among such is a charter by Peter de Haga to the chapel of St Cuthbert at Old Melrose of half a stone of wax for its lights. A similar gift was made to the tomb of St Waltheof by the brother of the Seneschal of Scotland.

The marriage of the young King in 1251 to Margaret, daughter of Henry III, was the occasion for a demand by the English King that Alexander should pay homage for his kingdom as well as for his English lands. The demand was evaded but the youthful King and his wife, falling into the hands of the nobles who favoured England, were escorted to Kelso, where they met Henry III with his army. In the Abbey there an agreement was reached by which Henry became virtual dictator of Scotland. National feeling was roused by this high-handed proceeding and the Scottish nobles took action. In the Abbey of Cambuskenneth the Bishop of Dunblane, assisted by the Abbots of Melrose and Jedburgh, solemnly excommunicated the evil counsellors of the King. Ecclesiastical censure was backed by force and the upholders of England fled to the country they had favoured. Two years later, in 1259, an attempt was made by the Earls of Hereford and Albemarle and John Balliol to seize the king. They came to Melrose, their ostensible reason being to arrange terms with his advisers, but their plan was foiled and the day of English domination again staved off.

The War of Independence

The respite was not long. The sudden death of Alexander plunged the kingdom into years of war and disorder. It was but to be expected that a Border abbey should suffer with the rest of Scotland, the more so that it was rich and attractive and situated on one of the available roads from the Border to Edinburgh and the rich plains of Lothian.

[1] 1249-1286

It is difficult to place much reliance on the figures quoted as to the wealth of the convent but a valuation of the early 14th century gives its revenue as £2,400, in those days enough to mark it as wealthy.

A monk of Melrose, Frere Renaud of Ryhill, was one of the hundred and four auditors summoned to assist Edward I in the deliberations which resulted in the declaration of John Balliol as King of Scotland in 1292.

In 1296 the Abbot of Melrose signed the Ragman Toll. This oath, taken under pressure of an invading army, was not likely to enforce homage to Edward I's vanquished successor. When the convent acknowledged King Robert the Bruce is not certain, but in 1322 Edward II's retreating army, 'sore pressed by hunger and starvation,' sacked the Abbey. The story of the attack on the Abbey shows the ferocity of warfare, such as Melrose suffered more than once, for 'in the said monastery . . . the Lord William of Peebles, prior . . . one monk who was then sick and two lay brethren were killed in the dormitory by the English, and a great many more were wounded unto death. The Lord's Body was cast forth upon the High Altar and the pyx wherein it was kept taken away.'

For a time the Border was free from invasion but internal disorder bred feuds, such as the one related by Fordoun, when Sir William Douglas was 'slain while out hunting . . . by William of Douglas, Lord of that ilk . . . in revenge for the death of Alexander of Ramsay . . . his body rests at Melrose', the burial place of his house.

But the wise rule of Robert I[1] brought back a measure of prosperity to Scotland. The King gave largely to Melrose and his gifts are the more interesting since he lay under excommunication for the murder of Comyn in 1308. In 1326 he granted towards the rebuilding of the church the wards, reliefs and marriages, escheats, and other feudal dues of his county of Roxburgh, given as worth about £2,000 Scots. He also gave £100 from the fermes of Berwick to be administered by a monk *providum et discretum* to clothe and feed fifteen poor on the Feast of St. Martin. One year after Bannockburn, Robert, Bishop of Glasgow, had already granted the vicarage of Hassendean to supply a pittance to the convent, 'because of the hardships of war'.

By a letter addressed to his son, dated 1329, less than a month before his death, Robert I desired him to ensure that the convent might enjoy freely all gifts granted by him for the building of their church and appointed his heart to be buried in the monastery of Melrose. Various chroniclers, however, tell how, on his deathbed, he made Sir James Douglas swear to carry his heart against the enemies of Christ, how Sir James fell fighting against the Moors in Spain and

[1] 1306-1329

how finally the heart was brought back by Sir William Keith and buried in the Abbey.

The minority of his son, David II[1] saw renewed English agression under Edward Balliol and Edward III. Two chroniclers tell how the English King spent Christmas at Melrose where, says the Chronicle of Lanercost, 'he was exposed to much danger by cunning assaults of the Scots'. In 1357, on his return from imprisonment, David II granted his protection to the Abbey and in August of the following year he bestowed on the monks the whole customs of their wool. Also he confirmed them in the possession of their lands and in 1358 erected the Abbey into a free regality. Wyntoun tells of David's frequent visits to the Abbey:

> 'The King at Melros oft wald ly
> Quhen ony gret of the tother party
> Come dais of trewis for till hald;
> Enforce his marche sa he wald'

While the attention of Edward III was occupied by the question of the succession to the crown of France, the Scots with French forces under Sir John de Vienne, tried to make a diversion on the Border. Their raid in 1385 brought retaliation by Richard II, resulting in the destruction of Dryburgh and Melrose. It is recorded how he, on his march, destroyed everything 'saving nothing and burning down with the fiery flames God's temples and holy places—to wit the monasteries of Melrose, Dryburgh and Newbattle'. It is true that he indemnified Melrose by the reduction of 2*s.* on each sack of wool exported from Berwick-on-Tweed, but this may have been an attempt to regain trade diverted to Edinburgh after the capture of Berwick.

Trade

The trade of the monks of Melrose in wool has already been noted, but the Exchequer Rolls of the reigns of Robert II and Robert III show that it remained for long a profitable part of their income. Exemption from customs on so much as fifty sacks of wool was granted to them and in the years between 1379 and 1442 the quantity sent abroad usually exceeded the number of duty-free sacks by a considerable amount. Apart from figures the evidence of the property owned in Scottish trading centres is significant. Prior to the fall of Berwick-on-Tweed and its final capture by the English they had owned many houses in that burgh. Thereafter much land was held in Edinburgh, whose port of Leith, by the far-seeing policy of Robert I, took the place of Berwick.

[1] 1329-1371

The one known account book of an early Scottish merchant, Andrew Halyburton, Conservator of the Scottish Liberties in the Netherlands, gives some record of the Convent's trade. In a letter to him by Philip Gualterotti, a banker of Bruges, dated 1492–3, Melrose wool is named as a special commodity. In January 1502–3 there is a note of £80 paid by him to the cellarer of Melrose. Presumably this concerned the sale of wool, for a subsequent entry narrates the sale of five sacks of Melrose wool for £20.

In 1419 the Abbot, David de Benyn, appealed to Pope Martin for the ratification of his election. It was a matter of some urgency to him since the former one had been made by the anti-pope Clement VII and absolved him from the 'defect of birth' as the son of unmarried parents.

Two appeals by Abbot Benyn and his convent in the same year were supported by Archibald, Earl of Douglas, special protector of the monastery. Both were granted, conferring important favours. The first extended to Melrose concessions made to the Abbey of Holmcultram. These included the provision that any who should carry off or invade their possessions or goods should underly excommunication without appeal. Another gave licence to absolve their servants in the hour of death, to administer to them the sacraments and give them ecclesiastical burial. The second petition sought that in future every election of an abbot duly celebrated by the convent and confirmed by the Abbot of Rievaulx (the mother house of Melrose) should be upheld.

In 1422 the same abbot, claiming that he had rebuilt the monastery burned by the English, petitioned that whoever, for the weal of his soul and of the souls of the departed, should say the collect *Incline Domine aurum tuum* so often as he did so should have a hundred days' indulgence. This, too, was granted.

The Abbey and the Stewart Kings

During the imprisonment of James I in England Henry IV took the Abbey under his special protection, to ensure its safety and that of its possessions. He made one condition, that the garrison of Roxburgh Castle might be free to obtain provisions from the Abbey's lands for money paid promptly. On King James's return in 1424 from his long captivity in England he appears to have spent some days there, accompanied by his Queen, Joan Beaufort.

The history of Melrose, as of other abbeys, tends to become secular; great churchmen more and more became statesmen and advisers of the king, leaving their convents to the priors. State papers show that the Abbots of Melrose held high office in the kingdom. Andrew

Hunter, Abbot of Melrose, in 1450 is noted as the King's Treasurer, engaged on an expedition to Kinross anent the letting of the lands of Fife and with a justice eyre at Lochmaben in company of Lord Somerville. He was also the confessor of James II[1]. His coat-of-arms on the church, however, witnesses to his services to the Abbey.

In 1496 James IV[2] twice made the Abbey his headquarters; first for the raid of Norham, which was conducted in support of Perkin Warbeck and resulted only in 'a fatt pray'. Spending Christmas of the same year at Melrose, the King made offerings in the Church on Christmas and St John's Day, gave gratuities to the heralds in the hall, to the guisards on St John's night, and spent much money playing cards. In 1502 he received Lord Dacre, the English Ambassador there. In March 1502–3, by the King's command, a dirge was sung for the Queen of England's soul in the Abbey church, negotiations being in train at that time for James' marriage with her daughter, Margaret Tudor. Of the tax for the expenses of this marriage the Abbey paid £300, as contrasted with £150 each paid by the Abbeys of Kelso and Dryburgh.

When an English invasion threatened in 1523 the Abbot of Melrose was called upon to provide food for the army of the Regent Albany. Frequent raids wrought havoc in the Borders and in spite of a truce of five years declared in 1528 the situation was so serious that the Abbots of Kelso, Dryburgh, Melrose and Jedburgh were charged 'to remane in thair abbayis substantiouslie accumpaneit and weill bodin in feir of war for defence of the realme'.

As deputies from the general chapter of the Cistercians the Abbots of cupar and Glenluce visited the monastery in 1534. They ordered that the custom of allowing individual monks to have private portions, pensions and gardens must cease on pain of excommunication. The Abbot was to give account of his action in the matter at the next chapter of the order but a subsequent dispensation allowed the monks of Melrose, Newbattle and Balmerino private gardens if the produce were devoted to the general use of the convent. A compromise was to be effected also with regard to the two other abuses and the Abbey appears to have been fined for non-compliance with the desired reforms.

In July 1537 the Abbots of Melrose and Dryburgh were summoned by James V[3] to the burial of his first Queen in the Abbey of Holyrood. Two years later the King made a brief stay at Melrose.

The practice of granting benefices *in commendam*, originally a temporary appointment of some person to collect the fruits of a benefice during a vacancy, was greatly abused during the reigns of

[1] 1437-1460. [2] 1488-1513.
[3] 1513-1542.

James IV and James V. These Kings utilised the greater abbeys as rewards for services rendered to them and bestowed them upon great ecclesiastics or upon laymen who had not and who might never take holy orders. In 1532 James V wrote to Pope Clement VII asking that three of his natural sons might be eligible for benefices and in consequence Melrose was granted by him to his eldest natural son James Stewart, senior (to distinguish him from other two of the same name) while yet an infant. Kelso was given to him also, and the appointment to the two abbeys was confirmed at Rome in 1541, when the last Abbot, Andrew Durie, was forced to resign.

Upon the death of King James, Henry VIII pressed for the marriage of his son Edward with the infant Mary, Queen of Scots. Border raids were frequent and towards the close of 1544 the Earl of Arran made Melrose his rallying point for troops, cannon and provisions. The following year Sir Ralph Evers set fire to the town, pillaged and desecrated the Abbey church and its tombs, including those of the Douglases. He thus antagonised the Earl of Angus, who joined the Regent's forces before their defeat of the English at Ancrum Moor. The bodies of Evers and Laytoun were buried in the Abbey church which they had despoiled. Angus, reproached with his desertion of the invaders, stated his case conclusively: 'Is our good brother offended that I am a good Scotishman; that I revenged on Rawfe Evers the abusing of the tombs of my forefathers at Melrose? They were more honourable men than he and I ought to have done no lesse.'

Retaliation by the Earl of Hertford was disastrous; in the list of his destructions were 'towns, towers, stedes, barmekins, parish churches, bastel houses, 192; in villages, 243; in monasteries and friar houses, 7'—among these was the Abbey of Melrose.

From this blow the Abbey never recovered. The day of pious donors was past and the Commendator was more concerned to secure a revenue from the abbey lands for himself than to repair the devastation by the 'ancient enemy'. So in spite of the preamble of his feu-charters, excusing the alienation of lands on the grounds of policy and the repair of the fabric of the church, little or none of the price found its way to the convent.

The remaining monks protested in vain. On one occasion they refused consent to a charter granted by him until he should hand over 500 merks for the repair of the church and buildings. But 'my Lord Commendator foresaid as appeared to his vult and exterior moving of his body grew crawbit', and the monks withdrew their request. Again, in 1556 the sub-prior and three other monks protested against a charter by the Commendator to a burgess of Edinburgh on the ground that he had not fulfilled former promises. They further complained that ruined buildings had not been repaired and that the

Commendator had refused to admit new brethren to keep up the number of sixteen monks who should be there for service, naming one George Weir, whom they desired. Lastly they declared that 500 merks should have been given to a brother 'master of work' for repair of the church and dormitory, 'and without the kirk be repairit this instant sommer God service will ceise this winter'.

It was not only from the Commendator that they suffered. In 1558 they complained of persons in the neighbourhood tearing down lead from the cloister and in 1573 of serious damage done to the church by Sir Walter Scott of Branxholm.

The Position of the Abbey at the Reformation

It is difficult to assess the prosperity of the Abbey of Melrose at this time. The revenue appears to have been considerable, but the practice of appointing commendators tended to divert the revenue of the abbeys from its proper use to the support of individuals who resided little in their monasteries. Though there is no evidence how much James Stewart drew from the rents of 1561, it may be assumed that it was the larger part. The rent roll for that year was £1,758; fourteen chalders, nine bolls of wheat; fifty-six chalders, five bolls of barley; seventy-eight chalders, thirteen bolls, one firlot of meal; forty-four chalders, ten bolls of oats; eighty-four capons; six hundred and twenty fowls; one hundred and five stone of butter; eight chalders of salt from Prestonpans; and three hundred and forty loads of peat.

In spite of this apparent prosperity Melrose shared the problems of other abbeys with regard to lands. The system of land tenure had been changing since the time of James IV, whose last Parliament in 1457 had advocated the development of granting land in feu-farm on the grounds of national policy, a proceeding adopted by the King with the Crown estates. It was contemplated that Churchmen should adopt the practice but the Pope looked with disfavour on the alienation of Church lands. Protests from Rome, however, were ignored and the Churchmen, seeing the obvious advantages to be derived from feu-farm—an increased rental together with a substantial sum for *grassum*—were ready enough to plead their duty as Scotsmen. Other factors combined to commend the new system to the abbeys. The heavy taxation imposed on the Scottish church by Clement VII was a serious drain, but taken in conjunction with the growing disregard of their tenants for the censures of the Church—'the parochiners dred nocht cursing nor wald obey cursing'—the position became serious. The only solution was that of granting charters of feu-farm, leaving to the lay tenants the business of producing the money and of coercing sub-tenants into payment.

In this matter of feuing Melrose occupies a position different from most abbeys and consequently of great interest. In most places fueing resulted in the profit of the few who acquired the lands and exercised rule over their tenants, while these only exchanged the overlordship of the abbeys for that of a layman, gaining thereby no security of tenure. But the abbey lands in the vicinity of Melrose were feued to the groups of tenants who occupied them as a community and dealt as such with the abbey. This was the case with Darnick, Newstead and Gattonside, represented by their burlie-men in the Abbey courts, and rendering the due services, not as individuals, but as a whole. The feu-charter of Gattonside goes so far as to give the names of the tenants, with the amount of in-field possessed by them, but without altering the conditions of the tenure.

Yet even the granting of lands in feu-farm was not a final solution of the Abbey's difficulties. Invasion, combined with the primitive methods of agriculture, drove the tenants to complain of the amount of the feu-duty, no longer, as they explained, justified by the yield of the land. A document quoted in the *Feuing of Drygrange* (Scottish Historical Review, Volume VII, p. 355), concerning an appeal against a feu-charter, narrates that much land of that place had been reclaimed from forest, so that the original feu-duty had been increased 'the quhilk thai micht wele pay sa lang as the plentwisenes remanit with the grund'; but after long 'cultivation thai are becummin to sic infertilitie . . . like as our landis of Dornick, Galtounside, Newsteid and uthers.' The report of the inquiry shows that the request for a reduction of the duty was carried out impartially, for the evidence was taken of labourers on the land, among them of a man of 65 years, and the case having been considered a reduction of one-half was allowed.

The diminishing number of monks may have been due in part to such circumstances. Until the introduction of the custom of signing tacks and charters there is no means of finding the numbers resident in the convent and it is not till near the middle of the 16th century that these signatures are found. An early historian of the abbey states that there were eighty monks in 1520, seventy in 1540 and one hundred in 1542, of whom sixty joined the reformed Church. This estimate, however, is not borne out by the actual documents. The Letters of Bailliary to Scott of Buccleuch, early in the 16th century, were signed by twenty-eight monks; a charter in 1534 gives the names of thirty-four; in 1539, according to a charter quoted in the *Feuing in Drygrange*, there were twenty-two, including the Abbot and Prior. In 1555, James, Commendator of Melrose, and twelve monks signed another charter and a year later the same number is recorded. The Commendator was not eager to allow fresh admissions,

for the fewer the inmates the less allowance fell to be paid to them. The numbers dwindle gradually and the signatories of 1555 and 1556 include nine of the names seen in 1539, with only two new names, apart from that of the Commendator. In 1565 he and ten monks sign, of whom four are survivors of 1539, four from later deeds and two are new. But the Reformation prevented any additions to their number and they disappear until, at last, Dan John Watson, who embraced the Reformed Faith, signs as 'only convent'. It may also be noted here that the names of the monks are those still to be found in Border villages—plain names of the country people—showing that the convent did not in the 16th century recruit its numbers only from the nobility or landowners.

After the Reformation

The Earl of Hertford's invasion had laid its heavy hand on the Abbey of Melrose and its glory had departed before the Reformation. James Stewart, provided in 1541, died while still a youth in 1558. The revenues of the Abbey were bestowed by the Queen Regent upon her brother, the Cardinal of Guise, but at the Reformation were re-annexed to the Crown. The commendatorship, however, was granted in 1546 to Mr Michael Balfour, who is described as Abbot in his charters, and he appears to have held the office for about three years, during which time he sat in Parliament as commendator. Mr Michael received in April 1565 a charge to set no taxes or feus of the lands of Melrose without the consent of Queen's grace. This he seems to have disregarded for several charters of the Abbey lands were granted by him, probably more for his own advantage than that of the convent. But in 1566 Queen Mary bestowed the Abbey with its lands and teinds on James, Earl of Bothwell, as a temporal lordship. He enjoyed them for a brief space only as, upon his forfeiture for treason in 1567, the lands again reverted to the Crown.

The last to bear the title of Commendator was James Douglas, second son of Sir William Douglas of Lochleven, later James, Earl of Morton, Regent during the latter part of the minority of James VI. When that strong but rapacious nobleman was executed for complicity in a long-past crime the lands were divided and bestowed by King James on various nobles.

The lordship of Melrose went to the Earls of Haddington, a younger branch of the house of Hamilton. From them it was bought by Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch, widow of the ill-fated Monmouth. The connection of the Scotts of Buccleuch with the Abbey dated back more than two centuries for after the erection of the Abbey into a

heritable jurisdiction by David II the Abbots delegated the duties of the office to a layman, and the appointment became hereditary in the hands of the Scotts of Branxholm, who became Dukes of Buccleuch. The first holder seems to have been Sir Walter Scott, 'Wicked Wat', appointed bailie of the Abbey in 1519, by Robert, Abbot of Melrose. About five years later the appointment was made hereditary and confirmed by a charter of the Papal Penitentiary.

The work of the bailie of the Regality of Melrose was considerable, as the records show. The lands of the Abbey were extensive, its tenants numerous, and round the walled precinct of the Abbey arose gradually the town of Melrose which, though never a royal burgh, yet had burghal privileges of its own.

The Duke of Buccleuch still holds lands obtained by his predecessors as Stewards of the Abbey and is still the Superior of a great part of the parish of Melrose, while his sale of other portions of the unfeued lands is quite recent. It was by him that the Abbey was handed over to the nation in March 1919 and to that gift has now been added 'the Priory', the manor house of the Buccleuchs at Melrose, a part of which was built by the last Commendator for his own residence. Yet though the Records of the Regality of Melrose show that the Abbey lands and the town, which owed its existence to the convent, have a long history after the Reformation, it was that event which ended its life as a religious foundation, and its story might be said to end with Dan John Watson, 'only Convent'.

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